

To: Burke, Thomas[Burke.Thomas@epa.gov]; Deener, Kathleen[Deener.Kathleen@epa.gov]; Sonich-Mullin, Cynthia[Sonich-Mullin.Cynthia@epa.gov]; Smith, Kelly[Smith.Kelly@epa.gov]; Koglin, Eric[Koglin.Eric@epa.gov]; Sayles, Gregory[Sayles.Gregory@epa.gov]; Blackburn, Elizabeth[Blackburn.Elizabeth@epa.gov]; Lytle, Darren[Lytle.Darren@epa.gov]; Schock, Michael[Schock.Michael@epa.gov]; vanDrunick, Suzanne[vanDrunick.Suzanne@epa.gov]
From: Hubbard, Carolyn
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Carolyn Hubbard

Communications

EPA Office of Research and Development

202-564-2189

202-379-6744

From: Radebach, Mary (OS/ASPR/COO) [mailto:Mary.Radebach@hhs.gov]
Subject: Flint Readout 05/18/16

New standards put in place to prevent Legionella after Flint outbreak

By Roberto Acosta, MLIVE 05/18/16 4:02 PM

Flint-area hospitals and other health care buildings have been working on the implementation of new standards to prevent Legionella in their water systems. The Genesee County Health Department is hosting an educational session at 9 a.m. Friday, May 20 in the Harris Auditorium at the Genesee County Administration building, 1101 Beach St., to inform building facility managers, including hotels and motels, on the issues in complex water systems.

NAACP Lawsuit

NAACP files suit on behalf of Flint residents

By Kyle Feldscher, Washington Examiner 05/18/16 4:37 PM

The NAACP filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of Flint residents over the lead-contaminated water in the eastern Michigan city. "The people of Flint have been harmed through the failure of state officials to provide professional and accountable basic services mandated by federal law and expected by any person living in a major city," said Cornell William Brooks, the national president and CEO of the nation's oldest civil rights group.

NAACP sues Michigan officials over Flint water crisis

By Tresa Baldas, Detroit Free Press 05/18/16 4:28 PM

Adding to the tsunami of Flint water lawsuits, the NAACP today filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Flint residents and businesses, alleging Michigan officials failed to detect problems and then made the problem worse by not properly treating the water -- all while emergency managers appointed by the governor were in control.

NAACP sues Michigan, governor over Flint lead-tainted water

By KTBS ABC 3 05/17/16

The NAACP is suing the state of Michigan over Flint's lead-tainted water crisis. The Baltimore-based civil rights organization says Wednesday that the suit seeks property damages, pain and suffering damages, emotional distress damages and medical monitoring for Flint residents and businesses. It names Gov. Rick Snyder and other officials, along with two firms hired to evaluate water quality.

Gov. Snyder says budget request would keep Flint on Detroit water until 2017

By Ron Fonger, MLIVE 05/18/16 7:40 AM

Gov. Rick Snyder has recently touted his plan to keep Flint connected to the old Detroit water system until 2017 even as new revenue estimates raised questions about possible future funding cutbacks. Snyder, responding in writing to inquiries from the congressional Committee on Government Reform and Oversight May 9, detailed his support for the continued water

connection in answering a question from U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Flint Township.

Revenue shortfall can't imperil Flint, DPS

By Detroit Free Press 05/18/16 7:52 AM

We'd be tempted to say, "I told you so," if only the stakes weren't so heartrendingly high. The state's annual revenue estimating conference, held Tuesday in Lansing, revealed that last year's rosy revenue projections have wavered, and now the state faces a revenue shortfall, thanks largely to drops in both sales and corporate income tax collections. Because the state has a rainy day fund, and plans to transfer millions more to that account in this fiscal year, that \$460-million revenue shortfall need not spell disaster.

State revenues this year, next are \$333M below estimates

By David Eggert AP for The Mining Journal 05/18/16

Lower-than-expected growth in tax revenue will force Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and lawmakers to enact a new state budget with less spending than initially proposed, but the dip should not lead to cuts below current funding levels, the state budget director said Tuesday. Lower-than-expected growth in tax revenue will force Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and lawmakers to enact a new state budget with less spending than initially proposed, but the dip should not lead to cuts below current funding levels, the state budget director said Tuesday.

Snyder, Lawmakers Look To Trim Spending

By WDET 101.9 FM 05/18/16

There's less money than expected for Gov. Rick Snyder and the Legislature to put together the next state budget. There's also a shortfall in the current fiscal year. John Roberts is Gov. Snyder's budget director. He says the governor and state lawmakers can close the budget gap without jeopardizing money to address the Flint water crisis and the looming financial collapse of the Detroit Public Schools. "Flint and DPS will continue to be a priority for us," he said. "We see a way to balance with keeping those priorities funded."

City, state leaders speak out on possible budget cuts in Flint water crisis

By Amanda Emery, MLIVE 05/17/16 6:02 PM

City and state leaders are speaking out after State Budget Director John Roberts said commitments made in the Flint water crisis could be on the chopping block. The state of Michigan must cut \$460 million from its 2016 and 2017 budgets under new revenue estimates released Tuesday, May 17.

Officials set to trim state budget \$460M over 2 years

By Jonathan Oosting, Detroit News 05/17/16 5:30 PM

Michigan legislators will be forced to scale back spending plans by \$460 million in the current and upcoming fiscal years, Budget Director John Roberts said Tuesday, but Gov. Rick Snyder's administration will continue seeking aid for Flint and Detroit Public Schools. Officials from the state Treasury, Senate Fiscal Agency and House Fiscal Agency met Tuesday in Lansing and agreed to reduce projected revenues by \$173.9 million this year and \$159.2 million in the 2017 fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. Total revenues are still expected to rise, but not as much as previously anticipated because of weak corporate tax collections and stagnating sales tax revenue.

Michigan projects lower revenue amid Flint, Detroit money push

By Reuters 05/17/16 3:36 PM

Michigan lowered its revenue estimates for the current and next fiscal year by \$333 million on Tuesday, but Governor Rick Snyder's administration said it will continue to push for state funding to deal with costly problems in Flint and at the Detroit Public Schools (DPS). "Flint and DPS will remain top priorities for the administration," said Kurt Weiss, a spokesman for the state budget office.

\$460M state budget hole could impact funding for Flint water crisis

By Emily Lawler, MLIVE 05/17/16 3:04 PM

The state of Michigan must cut \$460 million from its 2016 and 2017 budgets under new revenue estimates released Tuesday, State Budget Director John Roberts said. The state has already passed \$67 million in supplemental appropriations to help Flint. But as part of his executive budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2017, which runs from Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016, Snyder proposed spending another \$195 million over that fiscal year and the current FY 2016.

Bucket brigade tries to convince state lawmakers to pay to fix Flint's water system

By Steve Carmody & AP for Michigan Radio 05/17/16

Activists came to the state Capitol today to dramatize the need for tens of millions of dollars to fix Flint's damaged water system. A line of people passed little buckets of water from a faucet inside the Capitol building to a 20-gallon drum outside. Ryan Bates with Michigan United says they wanted to show what it's like to live in Flint without tap water people can trust. Bates says state lawmakers should be doing more to help.

Business, sales tax revenue shortfall prompts Michigan budget adjustment

By Lindsay Vanhulle, Crain's Detroit Business 05/17/16 2:36 PM

Weaker-than-expected business and sales tax collections will require the state to cut spending by \$460 million by 2017, according to new revenue estimates released Tuesday. As a result, state budget officials say they will recommend smaller increases for some budget items than Gov. Rick Snyder initially proposed to the Legislature, while stressing that emergency funding for Flint and a proposed debt restructuring of Detroit Public Schools will remain priorities.

Criminal exam set, no deal for DEQ officials charged in Flint water crisis

By Ron Fonger, MLIVE 05/18/16 12:56 PM

Two state employees charged with wrongdoing in the Flint water crisis are on schedule to hear some of the evidence against them in two months, and an attorney for one says he's convinced his client committed no crime. "I'm confident in the case I have right now. I'm not shaking in my boots," said Frank Reynolds, attorney for Mike Prysby, a Department of Environmental Quality district engineer. Prysby and his boss at the DEQ — Stephen Busch — are charged with misconduct in office, conspiracy to tamper with evidence, tampering with evidence, a treatment violation of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, and a monitoring violation of the Safe Drinking Water.

Evidence being reviewed in Flint water crisis case

By Jennifer Chambers, Detroit News 05/18/16 11:25 AM

Two Michigan Department of Environmental municipal water regulators charged criminally in

the investigation of Flint's lead-contaminated drinking water crisis were ordered back to court on July 20 for a preliminary exam. Michael Prysby and Stephen Busch appeared briefly Wednesday before 67th District Court Judge Jennifer Manley with their attorneys at their sides.

Michigan Governor Talks Flint, Detroit Public Schools, And Trump

By Here & Now 05/18/16 [radio clip]

The state of Michigan has a \$460 million dollar budget hole, according to new estimates released yesterday, and also will have to find a way to cut that much out of its budgets for 2016 and 2017. That could have a major impact on the amount of money available to help Flint, which is still very much in the midst of the water crisis, and the Detroit Public Schools, which are mired in debt, and set to run out of money in June. Here & Now's Robin Young talks to Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder about how he's handled the situations in Flint and with the Detroit Public Schools, and how he plans to prioritize both going forward, given the state's budget shortfall.

Snyder: Flint won't slow state worker engagement

By Justin A. Hinkley, WZZM ABC 13 05/18/16 7:54 AM

Contentions over who to blame for the ongoing Flint water crisis won't hamper efforts to engage state employees in improving government, Gov. Rick Snyder said Tuesday. Many state workers have felt that Snyder has tried to shift blame for the crisis from his administration and his policies to civil servants. The governor has repeatedly apologized for the lead leeching into Flint's water after officials failed to add needed chemicals to water drawn from the Flint River. But he has also blamed the issue on bureaucratic failings of local, state and federal government and a handful of state workers who he says lacked common sense.

Snyder Says It's 'Possible' He Deleted Flint-Related E-mails

By Rick Pluta, WEMU 89.1 05/17/16 [radio clip]

Governor Rick Snyder now says it's possible he deleted some e-mails related to Flint, even though he earlier told a congressional committee that he had not. The governor still insists it's unlikely he deleted any Flint-related e-mails, it's just not impossible. "He just doesn't think he had anything on that topic and that if it was on that topic, it likely would have been important and probably would have been retained," said Anna Heaton, the governor's press secretary.

6 key Flint water crisis questions and answers from Gov. Snyder

By Ron Fonger, MLIVE 05/17/16 12:25 PM

Here are six of the answers provided by Gov. Rick Snyder about the Flint water crisis in response to questions posed by U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, ranking member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Other News

KWA pipeline almost completed, but water may not reach homes for another year

By Gary Ridley, MLIVE 05/18/16 4:22 PM

The new Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline is still on track to be completed this summer, but more work will still be needed before water begins flowing to Flint and Genesee County homes, according to the head of the water authority. Genesee County Drain Commission Jeff Wright, who is the chief executive officer of the water authority, said Wednesday, May 18, during the authority's public board meeting that the pipeline is expected to be completed and pumping untreated Lake Huron water by June or July of this year.

Dogs in Flint, Michigan Also Getting Tested for Lead in Wake of City's Water Crisis

By Hilary Shenfeld, PEOPLE 05/18/16 4:18 PM [video clip]

Lucy, Chico and Bandit had always been active, energetic Chihuahuas but had become lethargic a few months after drinking Flint, Michigan water. Their owner Nelda Martinez couldn't figure out why until news broke about the city's water crisis; she began to wonder if her pups might have been exposed to lead as well. The worry was prompted after the city started using untreated water from the Flint River, which caused lead from old pipes to leach into the water. A state of emergency has since been declared in Flint and several government officials are facing criminal charges in connection with the lead contamination.

Andre Drummond, Mark Ingram to join Snoop Dogg in Flint celebrity hoops game

By Eric Woodyard, MLIVE 05/18/16 1:51 PM

Numerous star-studded events were happening around Toronto, Canada, as part of the 2016 NBA All-Star Weekend. Rap legend Snoop Dogg and former Toronto Raptors player Morris

Peterson were among the many celebrities to bump shoulders in "The 6ix" in the midst of February's festivities. While competing in a charity basketball game together, Peterson said he approached his longtime friend with the idea of hosting one in Flint at a later date.

New free preschool program in Flint aimed to help mitigate effects of lead

By Jiquanda Johnson, MLIVE 05/16/16 5:20 PM

Flint Community Schools and University of Michigan-Flint have partnered to open free preschool programs in the district to help mitigate the effects of lead in Flint children. With an unknown number of children poisoned by lead in Flint after a 2014 water switch, officials say the the Great Expectations pilot program at Brownell Holmes Stem Academy on Flint's north side will help provide services to fight the potential effects of lead.

19 bars, restaurants and other businesses to highlight eateries in Flint

By Dominic Adams, MLIVE 05/16/16 7:06 AM

Nineteen bars, restaurants and food-oriented businesses will create special menus, have promotions and other events as part of Flint restaurant week May 17-21. Patrons can pick up "passports" at each participating restaurant throughout the week to be able to track the number of establishments they've visited. Visitors who stop at enough businesses during the week are eligible for a special prize on the final day of the event Saturday.

Politics

Ruffalo group defends Flint water work

By Jonathan Oosting, Detroit News 05/18/16 5:26 PM

Water Defense, a nonprofit group fronted by actor and activist Mark Ruffalo, is defending its work in Flint against sharp criticism this week from a national researcher who helped expose the city's lead contamination crisis. Virginia Tech professor Mark Edwards on Tuesday called Ruffalo an "A-list actor but F-list scientist" after his group alleged that water testing amid the city's water crisis does not account for harm from lead and other contaminants that might enter the body through skin absorption and steam or vapor inhalation.

GOP lawmakers: EPA employee misconduct isn't getting better

By Timothy Cama, The Hill 05/18/16 10:46 AM

House Republicans grilled officials from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Wednesday, saying the agency's response to employee misconduct has not improved the situation. In the latest in a series of hearings by the House Oversight Committee, Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) and others in the GOP repeatedly slammed the EPA's deputy chief for not doing more to stop rogue employees and properly punish them.

Michigan Dem Says Flint Water Crisis Perfect Time To Make Gov't Bigger

By Chris White, Daily Caller, 05/17/16 3:38 PM

A Michigan Democratic lawmaker said Monday he intends to introduce a bill that would create a panel of bureaucrats to help Flint citizens recover in the long-term from their on-going water crisis. The process to fix Flint's dilapidated water pipes and tainted water supply will take years, Michigan Democratic Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich said, making it less likely that the current spate of politicians and local officials will be around to see the final solution.

Skubick: Will Kildee make jump from Congress to Governor's office?

By Tim Skubick, WLNS 6 05/17/16 7:07 PM

A prominent figure in the Flint water crisis is reportedly running for governor but only if Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan does not run. Nobody is actually running for governor until he or she announces it, but here's the current thinking in the Congressman Dan Kildee camp.

Beyond Flint

America needs a new vision for infrastructure

By Dennis Slater, The Hill 05/18/16 10:00 AM

Infrastructure matters. It matters to the families in Flint who don't have access to clean water, the commuter who's late for work due to traffic jams, and to farmers who depend on many different types of infrastructure to move their products to market. That's why it's more important than ever, especially during Infrastructure Week, to turn to those people who depend on infrastructure the most for a forward-thinking national vision to shape the next generation of infrastructure.

Flint-Like Levels Of Lead Detected In Water At Three Texas Centers For The Disabled

By Molly Evans, KERA 05/18/16 9:30 AM

Recent tests of the water at State Supported Living Centers in Brenham, El Paso and San Angelo revealed toxic lead rivaling the amount found in the water system in Flint, Michigan. In Brenham, studies found the water had 18 times the maximum acceptable level, The Dallas Morning News reported. Officials at the Brenham facility are now distributing bottled water to residents and employees, but the Texas Department of State Health Services and DADS (the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services) want people to be screened for negative, long-term effects of exposure, Texas Standard reported.

Flint syndrome: Fewer cops, abandoned parks, and why more cities may crumble

By Ron French, MLIVE 05/12/16 2:21 PM

In one decade, Michigan cities lost 2,300 police officers. That's like laying off every Michigan State Police trooper. Twice. Ann Arbor lost 23 percent of its police force; Saginaw, 41 percent; Troy, 48 percent. And it only happened here. No other Midwestern state witnessed anything close to the massive police layoffs that occurred in Michigan between 2005 and 2014.

Welcome to Pennsylvania, where cash-poor cities work together with state emergency managers

By Ron French, MLIVE 05/17/16 10:51 AM

If you want to understand the problem with Michigan's emergency manager law, Pittsburgh is a good place to start. More than 200 miles east of the Michigan border, Pittsburgh is a rust belt, financially distressed city of its own, dealing with population loss and economic upheaval like many of Michigan's cash-poor communities. It has been under Pennsylvania's version of state control for more than a decade. That's where the similarities end.

Could coal ash water contamination be state's Flint, Michigan?

By Rob Schofield, The Mountaineer 05/17/16

There are a lot of serious indictments that can be leveled at a public official. Corruption, ineptitude, disloyalty – the list of potential offenses is a lengthy one. At some basic level, however, it's hard to imagine a more damning allegation than that he or she knowingly jeopardized the physical health and wellbeing of his or her constituents. This brings us to the

ongoing controversy surrounding North Carolina's monumental coal ash problem and, in particular, the challenge of providing access to safe drinking water for hundreds of families who live in the vicinity of coal ash storage sites.

Mary Radebach

Management Analyst

COO, Division of Communications

HHS/ASPR/COO (CTR), GAP Solutions Inc.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)

200 C Street SW, Washington DC 20024

O'Neill Building, 12F11

Office: 202-692-4605| BB: 202-770-8521

Mary.Radebach@hhs.gov